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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2016  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [UNMIK](#) [YI](#)  
SUBJECT: NEW KOSOVO PRIME MINISTER ROARS OUT OF THE GATE

REF: PRISTINA 229

Classified By: COM PHILIP S. GOLDBERG FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (C) SUMMARY. In two meetings this week, COM found new Kosovo Prime Minister Ceku already deeply immersed in policy and quickly getting up to speed on economic issues that demand rapid resolution. He has gained the attention of his cabinet by announcing that the tenures of all ministers will be subject to his personal review every 90 days. COM advised the PM to focus particular attention on a finite number of portfolios -- property rights, interethnic crime, decentralization, outreach to Kosovo Serbs -- with potential to move the final status process forward. SRSJ  
Jessen-Petersen called COM after his first substantive meeting with Ceku to rave about the new PM's cooperative approach on difficult issues such as the staging of a tender to name a second mobile phone operator for Kosovo. END  
SUMMARY.

12. (C) In March 13 and March 16 meetings, COM and E/P chief found new Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Ceku appreciative of the task before him but already tackling it with discipline. After his swearing in on March 10 (reftel), the primary members of the governing coalition (the Democratic League of Kosovo and Ceku's Alliance for the Future of Kosovo) announced that Ceku would have the political authority -- complementing the Constitutional Framework's grant of legal authority -- to replace at will any minister in the government regardless of party affiliation. Ceku thereupon announced that he would personally review the performance of each minister at 90-day intervals and would not hesitate to replace underperforming cabinet members. COM told Ceku that, judging from the number of urgent requests for assistance USAID has received in recent days from ministries, the message that ministers are on probation seems to have registered.

13. (C) To Ceku's concern that he and his small staff have much to learn quickly, COM said the USG is ready to provide technical staff as we have for his predecessors but also advised Ceku to not try to do everything but rather to focus attention on an achievable number of goals. COM urged Ceku in this regard to consult with his Kosovo Albanian final

status negotiating team colleagues regarding the recommendations of U.S. final status Special Representative Frank Wisner. Ambassador Wisner, COM said, had recommended that Kosovo Albanian leaders focus on making progress on property rights cases (especially those involving the Serbian Orthodox Church), prosecution of interethnic crimes, outreach to the Kosovo Serb community, and decentralization. Ceku was in complete agreement with COM's proposal and said he expected that final status-related issues would come to increasingly occupy his time in the immediate aftermath of the March 17 Vienna meeting on decentralization.

14. (C) Ceku wanted to discuss two economic issues in particular -- telecommunications and energy. He said that he had already been approached by representatives of the Mobikos consortium, ostensible winners of a 2004 mobile phone license tender that has been voided by UNMIK, and that "the pressure is building." He said SRSG Soren Jessen-Petersen had informed him that the former tender had been annulled and that he had been therefore surprised to receive a letter from Telecommunications Regulatory Authority chief Anton Berisha recommending that he agree to resurrect the Mobikos license. COM replied that UNMIK and the PISG needed to agree on a way forward given the strongly different views held by those involved and advised Ceku to discuss the matter with the SRSG. (NOTE. Jessen-Petersen and Ceku announced at a joint press conference on March 17 that a new tender would be launched. END NOTE.)

15. (C) Ceku admitted to a particular problem in managing Energy Minister (and the PM's distant cousin) Ethem Ceku, who was already urging the PM to dismiss the Irish company, ESBI, that manages electricity utility KEK and turn responsibility

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for the energy sector fully over to the ministry. PM Ceku realized that Energy Minister Ceku's proposal calls for action well beyond the government's authority under the Constitutional Framework. He said he plans to take his cousin to task in from of his entire staff for attempting to undermine a KEK management structure that the PM believes has produced, on balance, a vast improvement in KEK operations. The PM expects that the energy minister will quickly bounce back from this dressing down. (NOTE. Any decision PM Ceku may have been facing on energy was largely overtaken by a March 14 letter from AAK President Ramush Haradinaj to ESBI chief John Ashley that strongly endorsed ESBI's management strategy at KEK. END NOTE.)

16. (C) SRSG Jessen-Petersen called COM on March 17 to rave about Ceku's focus and cooperative spirit in their just-concluded first substantive meeting, saying that Ceku had achieved more in a week than his predecessor had in a year.

17. (U) USOP clears this message in its entirety for release to UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari.  
GOLDBERG